

**City of Chula Vista
Parks and Recreation Commission
Minutes**

Thursday - 6:30 p.m.
City Hall – Executive Conference Room

July 17, 2008
276 Fourth Ave.

Meeting called to order by Chair Searles at 6:30 p.m.

Staff Present: Ed Hall, Assistant Recreation Director
Ted Nelson, Recreation Supervisor III
Agnes Bernardo, Parks Manager
Jack Griffin, Director of Public Works

Guests:

1. Roll Call/Motion to Excuse

Members Present: Commissioner Cien-Mayer, Searles, Garza, Chambers
Members Absent: Commissioner Scott, Rios

MSC (Garza/Cien-Mayer) to excuse Commissioners: Scott, Ramos, Rios

2. a. Approval of Minutes - April 17, 2008

MSC: Garza/Cien-Mayer

Vote: (Vote 4-0-0-3 with Scott, Rios absent) to approve Minutes of April 17, 2008.

b. Approval of alternating Parks & Recreation Commission meeting venue (Buck Martin)

MSC: Searles/Cien-Mayer

Vote: 4-0-0-3 with Scott, Rios absent)

Chair Searles reminded the Commissioners that this item was 1) at the request of the City to preserve resources and conduct meetings every other month and 2) look at the venue and perhaps alternate locations and make the meetings more accessible to people on the west side of Chula Vista.

Commissioner Garza stated that he was in favor of the every-other month meetings and also alternating the venues, but voiced a concern that if there was not a meeting one month that it could be 4 months between meetings. He suggested that if there were not a meeting one month that it automatically be scheduled for the following month.

There was discussion as to whether the current wording was specific enough when it said "the Commission continue to be available every 3rd Thursday of the month on non-meeting months in the event a commission meeting is required due to emergency issues" and also how to determine whether a meeting is needed or not.

Chair Searles suggested that the wording be replaced with "in the event a Commission meeting is not held on a previously scheduled date."

Commissioner Garza raised the question of having a lack of quorum. What are the parameters if a person missed 2, 3, or 4 meetings. Commissioner Searles mentioned the directive received from the Mayor regarding attendance was very strong and she is very concerned about it. It is actually spelled out in the handbook. Asked that everyone make a commitment to ourselves and to each other make an effort for regular attendance.

Commissioner Garza stressed that no one can help it if there's an emergency, but that not notifying the Commission of an absence may risk having a quorum.

Commissioner Cien-Mayer brought up that we previously e-mailed if someone was to miss a meeting. She believes there is an opening due to Ramos being termed-out so we're already short one person and it is easy to get to the point you don't have a quorum.

There was further discussion regarding the advertising of the schedule and problems with communicating by e-mail due to the Brown Act. Chair Searles thinks it's allowable to e-mail regarding attendance.

Chair Searles made a motion that the wording of the last sentence in the second paragraph of the memo be re-worded to read: "on non-meeting months in the event a commission meeting is not held on a previously scheduled meeting date."

MSC: Searles/Garza)

Vote: 4-0-0-3 (with Scott, Ramos; Rios absent)

Chair Searles made a motion to take item 3A out of order due to the fact that Mr. Martin had not yet arrived and Ed Hall, Assistant Recreation Director deferred comment on Item 2C to Mr. Martin.

MSC: Searles/Garza

Vote: 4-0-0-3 (with Scott, Ramos; Rios absent)

3. a. Harborside Field Allocation (John Gates)

Mr. Ed Hall (Assistant Director of Recreation) reminded the Commission that originally Harborside Park was withheld from the allocation process based on the then voiced wishes of the community. Since that time there has been considerable sentiment that has been expressed about better/legitimate uses of the park. The neighborhood parents from the school were poled and it was determined that the majority would now like to see the fields allocated. Based on that public in-put the fields have been allocated for the fall. It is generally a younger age group that will be there, but it is important that the Commission be aware of this change.

Agnes Bernardo, Parks Manager, added that there is a little bit of renovation being done so there will be some noticeable patches removed and re-sodded.

Ted Nelson, Recreation Supervisor III restated that the field would be reallocated so that it is a field where a lot of the players live. The hours have been restricted there on Saturdays and he believes that Olympian Soccer is going to use the field on Saturdays. The hours currently will be 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Some of the fields are at risk and Agnes and her staff will have to determine which fields need to be shut down due to maintenance.

Commissioner Garza commented that he was thankful for the extra mile and extra work done to use the resources available to get every available field ready which helps the youth organizations tremendously.

Chair Searles stated that, initially, he had had concerns about this allocation and asked if anyone currently had concerns.

Ted Nelson said that he could speak to the concerns. Francisco Rios grew up in that neighborhood and was very passionate about that field being there for the kids. The concept of it serving that neighborhood is a great idea. The problem is that there are a lot of other groups from outside Chula Vista that are not members of the Sports Council using the fields for practice and games. In order to control the field and use and what's going on there you have more control if it is allocated. The Sports Council is in partnership with the City and help keep the fields in good, safe condition and the outside users are sometimes not of the same mind.

Jack Griffin stated that even before designing the park we had quite an extensive community outreach and at that time the community was almost unanimous to not go the allocation route, but obviously what you expect to happen and what happens is often not the same thing. He did not know that we went back and polled and found it interesting that the community itself obviously recognized it.

Commissioner Garza said that he thought it was important to recognize each park and realize that each area of the community is different and to be careful that we don't end up with a blanket statement because it is important to keep current with the use of the particular fields.

Agnes Bernardo, Parks Manager, commented that we have allocated accordingly this season but that there is nothing to say if they want something different it cannot be changed. Keep in mind that Lauderbach Park has been shut down and that has created the majority of the problems that at Harborside now. Lauderback is going to reopen and we're trying to encourage legitimate use at Harborside as we do at Lauderback.

2. **C: Approval of Year-End Report for the Parks & Recreation Commission (Buck Martin)**
 MSC: Chambers/Garza
 Vote: 4-0-0-3 (with Scott, Ramos, Rios absent)

Chair Searles stated that he was amazed at the amount of things that have gone through the Commission. He referenced the comment by Commissioner Cien-Mayer that we were short one member and that the Summary of Activities states 7 members and that "the Commission is once again at full strength." The wording should be changed to indicate that there are only 6 members and "is currently seated with 6 members and are looking forward to adding a new member in the coming year."

Members scanned the Summary of Activities for accurateness. Commissioner Chambers asked for an update as to how the alcohol ban is working at Harborside. Agnes Bernardo, Parks Manager, confirmed that things were better and Ed Hall, Assistant Director of Recreation affirmed that the alcohol ban was just a tool to be able to engage in looking at other activities. There might not be a whole lot statistically but it is an important tool.

Chair Searls was encouraged by the use of school fields and the recognition of the need to build additional aquatic facilities – even in this difficult budget time. He then asked for any discussion before moving forward.

Commissioner Garza stated that the list of items looked complete and that he thought the use of school fields is critical and would like to recommend that updates be a standard agenda item. There's always lots of discussion, but if the Commission doesn't stay focused on it nothing will get done.

Mr. Martin said that it is something that our Athletics Director Ted Nelson has done an excellent job on and working cooperatively with Park Operations. He knows there is a current proposal with the school district in working with their ASB Directors and their Principals. There are a lot of agreements for "sweat equity" at a lot of different facilities. It is going to put a lot of pressure on the Recreation and Parks Operations Depts to try to accommodate them depending what they decide to do with their new system of cost recovery. At this time we have no definites, but as soon as something is put together the Commission will be one of the first to know. We're also looking at some things we can do in our fiscal situation with our Parks Operations. We need to be able to maintain our inventory so we can reduce the time the fields are down and keep the product there for consumer use.

Since Commissioner Garza wants to revisit the issue on a regular basis Mr. Hall stated that since it's going to be an ongoing issue it might be wise to have it as a standing item – to include updates on fields, allocations, availabilities and other issues. Mr. Martin said that as caretakers for the Parks and recreational programs we cannot take it lightly. There are some things we can help influence through community input and support from the various organizations we work with.

Mr. Martin mentioned that Ted Nelson is retiring, but the good thing is that we are going to be able to keep him in a capacity to oversee the Youth Sports Council in a part-time hourly position.

Chair Searles not sure it needs to be a standing item but we can certainly re-visit every time it comes up and decide at that time how to handle it.

D. Election of new Chair and Co-Chair for FY08-09 (Buck Martin)

MSC: Chair – Commissioner Garza Chambers/Cien-Mayer

Vote: 3-0-1-3 (with Scott, Ramos, Rios absent)

MSC: Vice-Chair – Commissioner Chambers Cien-Mayer/Searles

Vote: 3-0-1-3 (wth Scott, Ramos, Rios absent)

In discussion Commissioner Garza inquired about the length of the term and Chair Searles stated it ran for one year – from July to July. It was also decided that there was not a term limit.

Regarding Chair: Chair Searles inquired if anyone was interested in nominating someone, to include themselves. Commissioner Chambers nominated Searles and Commissioner Cien-Mayer seconded the nomination. Chair Searles declined. Commissioner Chambers then nominated Commissioner Garza; Commissioner Cien-Mayer seconded the nomination. Commissioner Garza is the new Chair for FY08-09.

Regarding Vice-Chair: Commissioner Chambers nominated Commissioner Cien-Mayer and it was seconded by Commissioner Garza. Cien-Mayer declined. Commissioner Cien-Mayer nominated Commissioner Chambers and it was seconded by Commissioner Searles. Commissioner Chambers is the new Vice-Chair for FY08-09.

4. Unfinished Business – None

5. New Business – None

6. Written Communications – None

7. Commission Comments

Commissioner Garza had no additional comments, but thanked the Board for the nomination. He said that once the obligation was undertaken that it should be taken seriously and he would do his best.

Commissioner Cien-Mayer congratulated Recreation for obtaining funding for the Fun Fit Free Days and thanked Mr. Martin for going to Council to get the proclamation.

New Vice-Chair Chambers thanked the Board for the confidence voting him to be Vice-Chair and announced that he would not be attending the November meeting as he would be in Quantico, VA at the FBI academy.

Current Chair Searles said that he has loved seeing the 4th graders at Parkway Pool when he swims in the morning and enjoys seeing their progress as they get more confident in the water. He is proud to see that funding was obtained and the City should be commended. He has enjoyed this year as Chair and enjoyed working with City Staff and the Commission. He said is great to be part of all this.

8. Staff Comments –

a. Recreation Monthly Report (Buck Martin)

Mr. Martin announced that the Go Play – Get Fit Youth Day took place today in Coronado and that we worked with the Greater San Diego Coalition for Health & Wellnes as a co-sponsor. Mayor Cox attended the event which was to help combat obesity and high blood pressure in our youth. Approximately 1,500 children attended and it seems that people are starting to listen to this most serious problem.

Mr. Martin stated that the Recreation Department had applied for, and received, funding from Kaiser-Permanente in the amount of \$50,000 for lessons and transportation for 10 schools. There is also a chance for preliminary funding for an additional two years. The department continues to look for additional funding in all areas to offset the \$2.1 million budget cut.

Director Martin recently got a call from someone regarding the teen dances at Loma Verde and said that it was nice to see people stepping up to help out and do the right thing regarding not only the youth, but adult programs.

Chair Searles inquired as to whether the hiring freeze was continuing and Mr. Martin advised him it was still in effect, but that staff was doing the best they could with the resources available. There was a discussion of losing the Youth Center but we still have access to it if we need to. It depends on what the School District comes up with as their rate schedule. Further discussion included reassignment of the Youth Athletics Coordinator and a Recreation Supervisor II. The responsibility of running individual programs has been passed

on to the individual centers. This arrangement should bring on some competition between the centers and make things more interesting.

Commissioner Garza inquired about the skateboarders in Veteran's Park. Mr. Martin stated that the department is working with the Police Department to develop appropriate signage and work with the kids due to the fact that the budget had been cut and the money is no longer there to have such presence in the parks. We have also tried various involvement with the docents and Tony Ramos who runs Veteran's Park.

Chair Searles asked how sustainable the funding is for the free lunch program. Mr. Hall said that it was controlled by the USDA to the State and then to the County level and is connected to the regular school lunch program which extends to the summer and it's not going away. There was discussion of the program and how it flowed with the recreation programs for the kids. Also discussed how important it was to the kids because sometimes they only eat out of food machines.

Chair Searles asked how the city's commitment to promote physical activity is advertised. Is it set in structured time frames? Mr. Hall advised him that the department is working within grant parameters and part of it is serving the underserved. Have been making a lot of use in getting the word out through special events. Chair Searles asked if it was funded at a FTE or part-time. Mr. Hall stated it was funded part-time and the vehicle was funded and the amount of the part-time was up to the city to determine. Done wisely we could realize up to two years of funding, still make a presence at special events and take some pressure from other staff. Chair Searles stated that it would be a good opportunity to look at a partnership between mobile health resources and physical activities resources. This matter needs additional discussion.

Mr. Martin also announced that Bob Morris, one of the senior managers, after 30+ years is also retiring on August 4th. Commissioner Garza and several other members had good comments about the work ethic and capability of Mr. Morris.

b. Public Works (Jack Griffin)

Jack Griffin was previously the Director of General Services and is now coming to the Board after the city's reorganization as the Director of Public Works. He was previously involved in parks development which will now be under the direction of Engineering. Mr. Griffin said that Agnes Bernardo is also in attendance in her position as Parks Manager.

Mr. Griffin advised the Board that there was a blitz of park renovations this summer. A lot of staff has been designated to help with the renovations and many fields will be closed for a time in July and August. Agnes Bernardo stated there were 22,000 sq feet of sod being placed.

There was a discussion of the type of grass being used in that it is self-repairing and spreads quickly. Unfortunately it is in high demand and the delivery was tentative for Wednesday the 16th. The grower advised the city that they had had a flood and the grass would be delayed so that the delivery is expected the week of July 21st. We are trying to do this project all at once so that things can be back to normal quickly. Hopefully the grass will live up to its reputation because it is currently withstanding a lot of flooding.

Jack Griffin explained that the city has had an abundance of copper wire stolen this year and it seems to be happening almost on a nightly basis. The thieves have been hitting street lights pretty badly and we have lost almost 30,000 feet of wire since June. In parks they steal from lighting and irrigation boxes. One of the problems is that the lockable boxes are \$150 each and the city has over 750 boxes. We are currently looking at alternative methods to

lock the vault boxes to make it more difficult for them to steal. The department is also working with the police and recyclers on Main Street.

9. Public Comments

Visitor (no name given) lives on the east side of Chula Vista and teaches at P.E. at Bonita Vista High School and like hearing about the great programs enabling kids to get physically active. He realizes it's tough due to diminished funding, but it's so important to our kids.

10. Other

Motion for Adjournment to the regularly scheduled meeting of September 18, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.

MSC: Cien-Mayer/Garza

Vote: 4-0-0-3 (with Scott, Ramos, Rios absent)

Prepared and recorded by Pat Laughlin